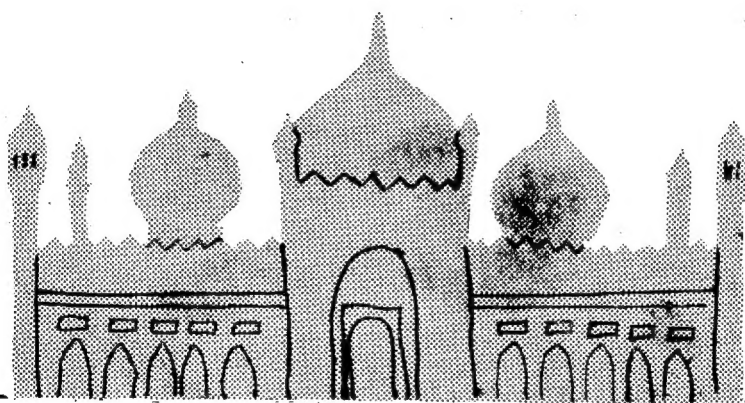


الدين عند الله الاسلام

the **MUSLIM SUNRISE**



JULY-DECEMBER 1978

In This Issue:

Miracles of the Promised Messiah

Jesus of Nazareth

Islam and Its Growth in America



The Muslim Sunrise

VOLUME XLV

JULY-DECEMBER 1978

NUMBER 3-4

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EDITORIAL**Professor Bernard Lewis on the Islamic
Attitude Towards Non-Muslims**

Professor Bernard Lewis of Princeton University is well known as an expert on the Middle East Affairs and as an orientalist scholar. His books on the contemporary problems of the Arab-Israeli conflict have received good reception in the United States. Recently he visited Israel to receive the Technion Harvey Prize awarded to him as a recognition of his knowledge of the region's history and politics.

It is unfortunate that his knowledge of Islam, the predominant religion of that area, is not as accurate and thorough as other aspects of the Middle East. During the course of his speech in Israel, he declared:

"There is something in Islam that makes it inherently difficult for the Arabs to accept and make peace with Israel... These medieval rules of perpetual state of war against all unbelievers, though interrupted by truces, never brought real peace."

Professor Lewis's unfair statement about the teaching of Islam came to our notice through a letter to the editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, published in its international edition (August 15, 1978). It was written by Mr. Abdullah Odeh, an eminent member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Israel. Without involving himself in any political controversy, he has clearly pointed out the fact that "Islam, as a faith and religion, has been misrepresented and Moslem thought defamed by ascribing to it rules which are totally foreign to its spirit and tradition."

An objective study of Islam on this issue would have led Professor Lewis to a very different conclusion. As Mr. Odeh observes, the noted scholar would have been expected to convey a true picture of the Islamic beliefs as given in the Holy Quran rather than resort to what Mr. Odeh properly

describes as "a distorted perception of the concept of Jihad, exposing Islam as a militant religion incapable of tolerating a rival faith and dedicated to the spread of Islam by arms as a religious duty of every Moslem."

Of course, in the Islamic history, like the historical development of Judaism, Christianity and other faiths, some views were advocated which were fundamentally alien to the teachings of the scriptures. Obviously the views expressed by Professor Lewis are based upon the old theory of *Darul Islam* and *Darul Harb*, professed by some Muslim writers, leading to the mistaken belief that there cannot possibly be a real peace or rapprochement between Muslims and non-Muslims. Professor Lewis could have found out that these views are neither confirmed by the Holy Quran nor supported by the *Hadith* and the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him).

The views based on the "Darul Harb" theory cannot possibly conform to Islamic teachings on the perfect, unhindered and unconditional freedom of belief as enjoined in the Quran. As the Quran declares:

"And say, the truth is from your Lord, then let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve."
(18:30)

The Islamic teachings on the tolerance of other beliefs have been repeated far too many times in the Holy Quran to be overlooked by an objective scholar. "So he who comprehends, it is for his own benefit and he who ignores, it is to his own loss." (6:105) is the attitude cultivated by the scripture of Islam. It professes unmistakably that:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong, so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believe in Allah, has surely taken hold of a strong and dependable support which will never break." (2:257).

This unequivocal declaration in Islam of the freedom of belief and tolerance of different views has been widely

recognized by the overwhelming array of scholars of Islam. It was in the very nature of these teachings that the Islamic society was far more open to examine and tolerate the beliefs and practices of the non-Muslims. The very spirit of these teachings enabled the Jewish scholars in the Muslim Spain to make valuable contribution to various fields of learning introduced and promoted by the Moorish rule. Conversely, the record of the Muslims living in peace and harmony under non-Muslim rule far outweighs any aggressive instances which might have led Professor Lewis to his inaccurate observation. As Professor Gibb wrote in his book *Whither Islam*:

“No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavor, so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim communities in China and the still smaller community in Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile the irreconcilable elements of societies of the East and the West.”

It is quite evident that no theories like that of “Darul Harb” could have been widely accepted by a people holding the values of freedom and tolerance as noted by Professor Gibb in the Islamic society.

We commend Mr. Odeh who, as an Ahmadi Muslim, defended the true teachings of Islam. If Muslims of other denominations could emulate his example, the true image of Islam will be impressed clearly before the scholars as well as others interested in the study of religion.

MIRACLES OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

By

Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad

(The text of the speech delivered by Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad at the Annual Convention of 1977 held in Rabwah, Pakistan, rendered into English by Nur-ud-Din Munir.)

This year my discourse pertains to one aspect of the life of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him), i.e., his miracles in the domain of knowledge.

First of all we have to see what is meant by the term 'miracle' and to which sort of events it is applicable. A miracle in the Islamic terminology is an event which is shown by a prophet of God under a divine decree and the like of which his opponents are unable to produce.

Hazrat Imam Ghazali (peace be on him), a divine of great renown defines the term miracle as follows. He says:

"If a prophet declares that the sign of my truth this day is that I will move my finger and no man shall have power to contest me, and it happens so, i.e., none is able to contend with him on that day, his truth shall be established." (Al-Iqtisad Fil I'tiqad).

Hazrat Imam Ghazali further holds that even one single sign is sufficient to prove the truth of the prophet. The same view has also been expressed by the Promised Messiah in one of his Urdu couplets. It is worthy of note in this context that though one sign is sufficient to establish the truth of a claimant to prophethood, God Almighty gave the Promised Messiah hundreds of thousands of shining signs.

The Promised Messiah himself made it clear in his writings. In his book *Haqiqatul Wahy*, referring to the verse of the Holy Quran in which God Almighty commands the believers to proclaim His bounties bestowed upon them (93:12). He says:

"God Almighty has elevated me to this high station of

spiritual eminence. He has favored me with this blessing, which is not the least the fruit of my own labor, but was bestowed upon me when I was in the womb of my mother. God Almighty has shown so many signs in my support that if I count them today, which is July 16, 1906, there number would exceed three thousand, and I am ready to proclaim this on oath." (Haqiqatul Wahy, p. 70).

Before the advent of the Promised Messiah, there were two schools of thought, both holding extreme views, contradictory to each other about the nature of miracles. One of them attributed fantastic miracles to prophets and saints which have no authority in the Holy Quran, Hadith, previous scriptures or history, and are against the very purpose of religion. In fact, this school, relying simply on their conjectures, took metaphors and similies pertaining to miracles as realities. The second school of thought rejected outrightly the very phenomenon of miracles. They were so beguiled by the law of causation that in their opinion, nothing could happen against their self made laws of nature.

The Promised Messiah corrected both these views. He said that there were some links within the chain of cause and effect, which were beyond the ken of man, through which God Almighty manifested His power and attributes. If He would not do so, human mind could never attain to a perfect certainty of Faith in Him. The Promised Messiah took miracles as real and a necessary element for reviving our faith in God. Indeed it is a miracle which can take us out from the mire of misgivings and doubts and illumine us with the light of Faith. God Almighty has bound up miracles with the following conditions:

1. In a miracle the opponents of a prophet are unable to produce its like. The Hand of God is seen behind it.

2. The fulfilment of some of its elements remain hidden as belief in a manifest truth does not deserve any spiritual reward.

3. The miracle must not contain anything which is against

the law of God and His promise.. (*Silsila Ahmadiyya*, p. 36).

Explaining the phenomenon of miracles, the Promised Messiah has the following to say in his book, *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, Vol. V:

“Miracles are such unusual events as are recognized and confirmed only by a just and discerning look. They are called unusual for no person other than the chosen ones of God have power to perform them. Miracles may be likened to the shimmering light in a moonlit night, overcast here and there by clouds, which affords guidance to any person who can see but from which those who are night blind cannot derive any benefit. Miracles cannot appear on this earth in that clear form in which they will appear on the Judgement Day. This has never been, not will it ever be. For in that case all veils would be lifted and belief in God would become meaningless and not deserving of any reward. So it cannot happen on this earth that two or three hundred dead men may revive and coming out of their graves may mix with the people already living here and be recognized by them as such. Then, with fruits of paradise in their hands and marks of hell fire on their bodies they may embark upon a village to village tour of the country and testify to the truth of a claimant to prophethood by their lectures and exhortations. Such things cannot occur before the Doomsday and whoever makes a claim to them is deceived by baseless stories and shows total ignorance of the laws of God. In this context, it should also be borne in mind that miracles are shown for a definite purpose, i.e., for providing the wise, just and discerning people with a reasonable basis for sifting truth from falsehood and hence their nature would be different according to the needs of different times. (*Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, Vol. V. pp. 33-34).

The present time in which the Promised Messiah has been raised is the most advanced in respect of knowledge and for the same reason the attacks on Islam based on scientific discoveries have been more acute than ever before.

In the circumstances and at such a time, the world stood sorely in need of miracles which could yield true belief and certainty in the Living God; and in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) as being eternal saviour of mankind and in the perfection and finality of the law of the Holy Quran.

When the Promised Messiah was asked about the object of his advent, he said, "God has commissioned me to show the way for reviving faith in the Living God (*Malfoozat*, Vol. I, p. 328).

This point should especially be borne in mind, that as the present time is known for its progress in knowledge, and as according to the Quranic prophecies, the earth is bringing forth its treasures (99:3), so God Almighty liked for the Promised One of these times, to be endowed mostly with miracles in the field of knowledge, and as far as possible to withhold miracles having simply outward glitter and gleam as happened in the past.

"In the blessed time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) also, instead of miracles like that of the staff and the white hand of Hazrat Moses, God gave him the miracle of the Holy Quran which is unique in its excellence and in its efficacy for moral and spiritual exaltation of man.

Similarly God Almighty revealed to the Holy Prophet not only his own destiny but the destiny of Islam for all times to come. Some of the prophecies which he made in this context saw their fulfilment in his own life time, some others immediately after his demise, and this process has continued to our times and will go on implementing itself ceaselessly. Let me give you some examples.

The Holy Prophet prophesied that the Qureshites will be overcome and Mecca will fall. It happened likewise. Mecca was conquered and the dominion of Islam established in the whole of Arabia. The Holy Prophet prophesied that the empires of Kaisar and Kisra will be razed to the ground by his

followers. They did it easily and became the masters of their vast treasures.

The Holy Prophet proclaimed that under the impact of the Holy Quran, his followers would become like guiding stars in the firmament of knowledge. This also proved true. His followers became the teachers of whole nations both in wordly and spiritual knowledge. They laid the foundations of various sciences and arts and it is on that frame work that the West has raised its magnificent structure.

In the domain of spirit they shone like the sun, moon and stars and shed their light on the nations which were groping in utter darkness. A great community of saints and friends of God rose from them, who like a galaxy in the spiritual heaven showed the right path to people in every age.

In the vein of these prophecies, the Holy Prophet had also declared that after the lapse of time, when his Ummah will show signs of decay and decadence; when Gog and Magog or the bearers of Cross would wake up from their slumber and hasten forth from every height to destroy and annihilate Muslims, then, God Almighty will raise a Mahdi a likeness of Messiah, from among the Muslims, who will restore Islam to its former glory.

We have seen this prophecy also having been fulfilled before our eyes, the decadence of Muslims came about as it was prophesied, and glory vanished. But then, from among them, the Mahdi has risen, the Messiah has come, who has propped the crumbling edifice of Islam from falling and inspired the dismaying Muslims with hope to rise again.

Consequent upon the crusade which he has launched, Islam will not only be saved from doom but in the end will revolutionize the whole world. The materialists of the West will also eventually enter its fold and acknowledge the divine authority of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him). So the sun at that time will rise in the west and the Holy Prophet's prophecy in this regard will be fulfilled. So there is nothing to be perturbed about the fortune of Islam.

The Day of its Victory is coming soon — and you should feel happy and frisk about with joy.

There is also a significant allusion to the spiritual revolution which will one day come about in the west in a vision of the Promised Messiah. He Says,

“I see a river like a stormy sea which is thundering its way from the West to the East in a zig zag fashion like a serpent, then suddenly changing its course, it began to flow from the east to West.” (*Tadhkira* p. 280)

In this vision of the Promised Messiah, we find a true picture of the influence which is exerted upon each other by the West and the East. The West has been likened to a serpent, whose bite is dreadful and fatal. It is emblematic of the ruinous influence which is shown flowing from the East to the West, the similitude of serpent has been dropped meaning that the spiritual change in the West will come about smoothly, in peaceful ways.

The signs of the fulfilment of this vision are already apparent. The proof is even now before us. Many of our brothers have come from the West to participate in this Convention and are sitting in our Midst today. They represent Ahmadi Communities in Europe, America, and Africa. So the sun of Islam is rising in the West and even all worldly powers combined together will not be able to stop it from rising. This is a vision from God Almighty, fulfilment will demonstrate the power and Might of Allah.

But it should be remembered that every work of God is like a seed small in the beginning. The world victimizes and ridicules it on its infirmity. But in the end the same small seed grows to a big tree under whose shady branches whole nations, take shelter and find rest.

All Faiths have passed through this mill of misfortune. Mark, how feeble was the beginning of Jesus Christ and how prone to despair were his followers. It seemed that his mission will fall to ground any time. But now his followers are dominating the whole world.

This is what happened to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him). In the beginning he walked about the lanes and streets of Mecca quite helplessly. The Meccans laughed at him and at his prophecy of world domination. But then he gained strength and in a twinkling of an eye he became the Master of Arabia and His followers spread their merciful mantle on the whole known world at that time.

God willing the same progress of Islam is destined to take place through Ahmadiyyat. The Promised Messiah has proclaimed it with great force and authority. He says,

“Look! the time is coming, rather it has already come when God will spread this movement far and wide. It will extend to the East and to the West, to the North and to the South and Islam will come to be identified with it in the whole world. These are not the words of man. This is the revelation of God Almighty, for whom there is nothing impossible. (*Tuhfa Gorarwiya* pp. 90-91).

Now I will relate some of the Promised Messiah's miracles in the sphere of knowledge. The Holy Prophet had prophesied that in the time of the Promised Messiah religious wars will be over and Islam will gain supremacy through reason and argument. So in fulfilment of this prophecy, the Promised Messiah started his crusade with pen. His writings, inspired by God Almighty have a remarkable spiritual impact. I will touch upon only a few of his works. I may observe in this context that these miracles having been wrought by the help of God, and being the fulfilment of some prophecies afford ample proof of the truth of Islam, of God Almighty, of the Holy Prophet and also of the Promised Messiah.

First of all I take his masterpiece, *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*; he has challenged the protagonists of all other religions to produce a like of it. He made it easier for them and declared that whoever would break even one fifth of the arguments proffered by him in support of Islam, he would give all his landed property to him. But though some 97 years have gone

by on the publication of this book, nobody has been able to accept this challenge.

The eminence of this book can somewhat be measured from this fact that Maulawi Muhammad Hussain Batalvi, a great leader at that time of the Ahl-i-Hadis sect of Islam acclaimed it as a unique contribution to the defence of Islam. He wrote in his journal, *Ishaat-us-Sunnah*, that in his view the book was unparralleled in the history of Islam and the devoted way in which its author had served the Faith was also without an example. He further wrote that if somebody took his words to be Asiatic exaggeration, let him produce a book like it and also introduce a personality like its author. He reminded his readers that its author had championed the cause of Islam most successfully and confounded its opponents as well as the deniers of revelation by inviting them to come to him and stay with him for some time where they will be afforded many opportunities of observing the revelation of God descending upon him and removing their doubts about spiritual verities.

This evidence is of a contemporary scholar of Islam, who was known for his erudition and occupied a position of honour in a large sect. It is fair to say that he must have been familiar with all the literature produced about Islam and that is why he claimed forcefully that in the past 1300 years no book had been written in the defence of Islam which could match the excellence of *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*.

Another miracle which the Promised Messiah performed in this sphere is his treatise known as *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*. It was read in a Conference of Religions, held in Lahore on December 26-29, 1896. Its translation in many languages of the world have since been published by our Community. The details of this miracle have been recorded by the Promised Messiah in many of his books and posters, also by the Conveners' Committee, consisting of representatives of various religions, in the report of its proceedings.

Before the commencement of the Conference, the Promised Messiah received a revelation from God Almighty that his treatise will win the palm. He publicised it in a hand bill, a portion of which is reproduced below. The Promised Messiah wrote:

“The great conference of religions to be held in Lahore, on December 26-27-28, 1896, includes in its programme a paper by this humble one; its subject, the excellences and miracles of the Holy Quran. This paper is no ordinary human effort but a sign among the signs of God, written with His special Grace and help.

The All-Knowing God has revealed to me that this is the treatise which will prevail over all the others. Its light of truth, wisdom and knowledge will put in the shade all other parties, provided only they stay to listen from beginning to end. It will not avail them to try and show anything similar from out of their holy books; be they Christians, Sanatani or Arya Hindus, or others. This is because Almighty God has decreed that on this day His Holy Book should reveal its resplendent force.”(*Tadhkira* p. 290).

The treatise was read in the Conference by Hazrat Maulana Abdul Karim, one of his devoted followers. The audience listened to it with rapt attention. As the reading proceeded, its triumph became more and more evident. The reading could not be completed in the time allocated to it; so the Conference had to be extended at the unanimous request of the audience by one day and the reading finished. It was applauded in private conversations and in public comment.

To give you an idea of the effect it produced on the audience I reproduce here the report by Hazrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani, a companion of the Promised Messiah, who was present in the Conference and listened to the Essay from the first to the last. He says,

“It was the latter half of the year 1896, when suddenly a Hindu recluse Shogun Chander by name, dressed in yellow coloured clothes entered Qadian. He had formerly held some

high office in the Government administration. But after the death of his wife and children, he had relinquished the world and was trotting the country in search of God and in quest of truth underlying the universe. He was feeling very restless and in the course of his search he had come to Qadian to meet the Promised Messiah and to sit in his company. In a matter of days he adapted himself to his new surroundings and became a familiar figure in the company of the Promised Messiah. He wanted to convene a Conference of religions in which their representatives should read papers on various questions fundamental to religion. He sounded the Promised Messiah about it. Welcoming the proposal, the Promised Messiah assured him that he would participate on behalf of Islam, if such a Conference was held in some big city like Lahore. He further told him that the suggestion was indeed a fulfilment of his own desires, for it was his own mission to present to the world the beauties of Islam and to show them the way of union with God. Shogun Chander was very happy at that and immediately repaired to Lahore for consulting other religious leaders and for organising the Conference.

Consequent upon his negotiations, the proposal was finalized and five basic questions were posed for answer by the representatives of various religions. An invitation was extended by the Conveners to the Promised Messiah also, who wrote a detailed essay in answer of the questions. Many days before the Conference was enacted, the Promised Messiah published a hand-bill in which he made the following announcement regarding his paper.

1. God Almighty has revealed to me that my paper will win the palm.

2. This paper will be the means of the exaltation of God Almighty and of the Faith of Islam. The glory and excellence of the Holy Quran will be manifested by it and the falsehood of false religions fully exposed.

3. As the contents of this paper are widely published, the truth of the Holy Quran will spread and spread and so also

the light of Islam, till it has fulfilled its destiny. (Poster: Great News for Seekers after Truth. December 21, 1896).

This great conference of religions was held at Lahore on December 26-29, the representatives of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Sanatan Dharma, Arya Samaj, Brahmoo Samaj, Sikhism, Free Thinkers and Theosophical Society read their papers. The audience consisted of a cross section of public, some eight thousand in numbers, coming from all walks of life, especially from the educated classes. The speakers dwelt upon the beauties of their respective religions.

The Essay written by the Promised Messiah was read in a sonorous voice by his devoted companion, Hazrat Maulana Abdul Karim. The effect of its reading was deep and lasting. Hazrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani says that Hindus, Sikhs and even unrelenting enemies of Islam from among Aryas and Christians were acclaiming the article as the best of the lot and the whole audience was so lost in it that they looked like lifeless statues fixed in the hall. Even if some birds would have come and sat upon their heads they would not have stirred. The essay had so completely enchanted the audience that the sound of their inhaling and exhaling was also not audible. The only sound which echoed in the hall was that of the essay reading. Everything else was subdued and calm. The essay had cast a spell of ecstasy over the listeners, so much so that Hindus and Sikhs, embracing their Muslim friends were confessing to them that if this was Islam, they would all join it some day." (*Ashab-i-Ahmad*, Vol. IX, p. 265).

Now I would tell you of another miracle which the Promised Messiah has performed in the sphere of knowledge. It has profoundly affected the future of Christianity. At the advent of the Promised Messiah, Christianity was prevailing over every other religion. Its supporters were successfully propagating its beliefs throughout the world. No other religion had the power to repel its attacks. Of all its beliefs, the belief in the Divinity of Christ was the most damaging to the human soul. Denouncing it the Holy Quran says, "The

heavens might well-nigh burst, and the earth cleave assunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces. Because they ascribe a son to the Gracious God." (19:91-92). It is an admonition in the strongest terms.

In the context of these sacrilegious dogmas, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) had assigned to the Promised Messiah the work of breaking the cross, which he has doubtlessly accomplished by writing his book *Masih Hindustan Mein* (Jesus in India). The Promised Messiah, on the basis of a revelation received from God, has made the astounding claim that Jesus did not die on the cross, nor did he ascend to heaven in his body of clay; but like other prophets, died a natural death on this earth and is buried in Kashmir. He identified his tomb in Khanyar, Srinagar, Kashmir.

This discovery has indeed broken the cross into pieces and cut at the very root of Christianity. The impact of this miracle is so profound on Christian nations that eventually they must forsake their beliefs and come into the fold of Islam.

In the end, the miracle which I want to place before you concerns with the Promised Messiah's God-given knowledge of Arabic language. Writing about it, Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad says:

"A perfect mastery in the Arabic language is an essential asset for successfully propagating Islam on a world level. The reason is that the Holy Quran, the source of Islam, is in the Arabic tongue. The Holy Quran is in itself a spiritual universe, having in it untold treasures of spiritual knowledge, yielding themselves to those who dig deep into it. Though its basic teaching will be the same for ever, but new discoveries will continually be made to meet the moral and spiritual needs of different times and different nations.

Anyway, the point at issue is that the knowledge of Arabic is a must for serving Islam. But the Promised Messiah had no opportunity to acquire it in any academy. He had

learned its rudiments from a private tutor and that was all. (*Najmul Huda*, p. 19).

But when God Almighty, perceiving in him the aptitude for becoming a world reformer, took him under His own care, He bestowed upon him, in addition to other excellences, a miraculous knowledge of the Arabic language. Consequently, the Promised Messiah has written numerous books in eloquent Arabic. He also extended a challenge to his opponents that if they doubted his God-given Mission and His support in its fulfilment, they should leave all else and contest him in the knowledge of Arabic and compete with him in its excellence. But all of them became dumb and were unable to match him in Arabic prose and poetry.

This is a great sign of his truth and an excellent miracle in the field of knowledge, for reputed scholars and Ulema have kept their lips sealed. It is well known that the Promised Messiah, in respect of Arabic, was a mere *Ummi*, i.e., virtually ignorant of it. As I have already alluded, the most he had acquired of it consisted in a few elementary lessons. It was God Himself Who made him its master. Referring to it, the Promised Messiah says in his book *Anjam Atham*.

“My excellence in Arabic language, despite the absence of any endeavor for it on my part is a clear sign of God. God Almighty wants to make me prevail over all other people in this field. Is there anyone from amongst my opponents to come and contest me? God Almighty has gifted me with the knowledge of 40,000 root words of this language and expanded my knowledge in its literature without any bounds. (p. 234).

But nobody took up the gauntlet. His opponents conceded his victory by keeping silent. However, some fair-minded scholars praised his excellence in Arabic language. For instance, Niaz Fatehpuri wrote in his *Nigar*:

“To deny Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s mastery in Arabic language is very surprising for the excellence of his Arabic poetry and prose have equally been acclaimed by Arab scholars. He did

not get education in this language in any academy, and in view of this I consider it a great achievement on his part and proof of God-given aptitudes and excellences.” (Nigar, Lucknow, September 1961).

The Promised Messiah had written quite a good number of books in Arabic, but had delivered no speech. Now in 1900, on the occasion of Eidul Azha, he received a revelation in the morning, commanding him to address the congregation in Arabic. He has described this event in his book *Nazul-al-Masih* (page 210) thus:

“In the morning of Eidul Azha, I received a revelation directing me to speak in Arabic. I told of it immediately to my friends. Before this, I had never delivered any speech in this language. But on that day I stood up to give Eid sermon and God Almighty made me speak in excellent Arabic, full of deep and profound significance. That address is contained in *Khutba Ilhamiya*, and consists of many many pages. I stood up and delivered it extempore. God Almighty has called it in his revelation a ‘sign’ and it was delivered purely by His power. I will never admit that some scholar in Arabic and well versed in literature can stand up so and deliver a speech like that.” (*Nazul-al-Masih*, p. 210; *Tadhkira*, p. 348).

Hazrat Bhai Abdul Rahman Qadiani has reported this matter also. He was present on the occasion of that Eid and himself heard that speech. He says:

“On the day of Hajj, one day before Eidul Azha in 1900, the Promised Messiah sent a message to Hazrat Maulvi Nur-ud-Din (who subsequently became his first successor) intimating him that he desired to pass the Hajj day in special prayers and supplications to God and asked him to prepare a list of such friends who wanted him to pray for them and send that list to him. So a long list of such friends was submitted to him and some people sent their applications direct to him also. Many Ahmadies who had come from outside places to celebrate Eid at Qadian also joined in it. The whole day was passed in offering prayers. The next day

was Eid day. When the people had congregated for it, the Promised Messiah said that he had been directed by the Almighty Allah to deliver the sermon in Arabic and reassured him that God will give him the necessary power. Another revelation from God disclosed that his speech will be in fluent Arabic. (*Tadhkira*, p. 357). The Eid prayer was led by Hazrat Maulana Abdul Karim. The Promised Messiah then gave a short sermon in Urdu, exhorting the Jamaat to keep united and to treat each other with loving kindness. Then he beckoned Hazrat Maulvi Nurud Din and Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim to come and sit near him. When they were so seated, he asked them to write very attentively whatever he would then speak. He again stressed the point and told them that as the whole of the speech would be God inspired, if they would miss anything it may not be possible for him to repeat it. (*Ashab-i-Ahmad*, Vol. 9).

Afterwards, the Promised Messiah sat on a chair in the middle door of Masjid Aqsa, facing towards the East and began his address in Arabic. The first sentence was:

“O ye creatures of God! Consider the significance of this day, the day of the sacrificial Hajj and Eid. In it are many profound lessons for the wise.”

Hazrat Bhai Sahib relates that from the time the Promised Messiah occupied the chair, it appeared as if he had repaired to some other world. His eyes were almost closed. His face seemed to have been covered with the light of Allah, and his forehead emitted such bright rays that it was difficult to cast a glance at it. Outwardly he was speaking but it was plain that God's power was moving his tongue. He was completely lost in Allah and it is not possible to explain his condition in words.

When he had finished, Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim, complying with the request of the audience, gave an Urdu translation of it. During this Urdu version, at a particular sentence, the Promised Messiah rose from his chair and prostrated in the mosque. With him the whole congregation

also fell down before their Heavenly Master.”

About this miraculous and extempore speech, the Promised Messiah says:

“Holy is Allah! A spring had gushed from the unseen. I do not know whether I was speaking or some angel through my tongue. This much I knew that I had played no part in its composition. Sentences came out of my mouth spontaneously and each of it was a sign for me — This was a miracle which God Almighty showed us — no one can bring a like of it. (*Haqiqatul Wahy*, pp. 362-63).

GLEANINGS FROM THE PRESS

By

Ijaz Ahmad Qamar, Ph.D.

VIRGIN BIRTH POSSIBLE

A laboratory mouse born at the Jackson Lab. in Bar Harbor, ME, has provided a living evidence that virgin birth may be possible in higher mammals. In a current issue of the scientific journal, *Nature*, Dr. L. Stevens reports that the lab. mouse has an unusual genealogy: three mothers and one father. On one side of the family is a normal set of parents, and on the other side is a foster mother and a "parthenote" from a virgin female (a parthenote is a ovulated egg that acts as though it were fertilized, developing in the uterus for a time as an embryo).

According to the eminent scientist, the parthenote initially has all the genetic capacity for life but it has never developed to full term in the original female. A parthenote can develop in another female, he says. Using this information, he removed a parthenote from its virgin mother, fused it with normal embryo, implanted the new embryo in a foster mother where it came to full term and was born. (Free Press, Winnipeg, Oct. 13, 1978).

FASTING HAS CACHET

Voluntary fasting, once the province of the saintly and religious, now has cachet. People all over the vast continent of North America are fasting for a host of reasons. The most common reason, of course, is for weight, but people also fast to cleanse their systems of the additives in modern food, for political reasons, or to empathize with the hungry of the world.

Mostly its philosophy, not fat, that inspires the hard-core fast. Dick Gregory, a comedian and faster par excellence, maintains that fasting repairs the body. In 1967 he fasted for

40 days, on water, to protest the Vietnam war. After the twenty first day he kept getting stronger and stronger and made 67 speeches. According to Gregory, fasting increases the psychic powers. He fasts for 30 days every year along with his family.

Many luminaries do fast voluntarily for various reasons. Singer Pat Boone fasts, so does Valerie ("Rhoda") Harper. Similarly, anchorman Kelly Lange (KNBC, Los Angeles) fasts. Her doctor advised her to fast when she was feeling really down and did not have any energy. Lange was skeptical of the advice but followed the doctor's orders. She says that made her feel good. Now she fasts once a week on Mondays to empty out all the junk she had had over the weekend. Lange maintains she does not fast to lose weight (though it may be a side effect) but just for gaining energy. Among the ordinary citizenry, similar effects from fasting are lauded. One woman reported that when she fasted for the first time she felt wonderful and high. She could have levitated, she said. (The Washington Post).

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN ENGLAND: WHO IS GAINING?

There is a religious revival in Britain but most of the converts are more attracted to eastern religious sects than to the traditional Christian churches. Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists all lost members in 1976 and 1977 while non-Christian sects reported substantial gains. According to Rev. Tom Houston, Executive Director of the British Bible Society: "The growth of many of Britain's smaller religious organizations is quite dramatic. It shows there is a real spiritual hunger which the traditional churches have not been able to satisfy. We Christians have a lot to learn from some of these smaller groups."

British government's Central Statistics Office figures show that between 1970 and 1976, eastern religions gained new members in Britain at the rate of 10 per cent a year. That

compares with a three per cent drop last year for the Church of England.

The Ahmadiyyas, a sect of the Muslim faith, will launch a one million pound drive throughout Britain when dozens of their missionaries will knock on doors and explain their beliefs. Their leader, Bashir Rafiq, said: "We believe there is a new spiritual force in Britain today and we shall take advantage of it."

One of the strongest religious cults is the Aetherius Society, whose followers believe that Christ lives on the planet Venus and sends radio messages to earth. (Winnipeg Free Press, June 17, 1978).

A PROJECT TO MEET SPIRITUAL HUNGER NEEDS

In a time when many North Americans are drawn to the inward search, often impelled by imported eastern techniques, a major new project has been launched to re-engage people with their own spiritual roots. Rev. Kevin Lynch, President of Paulist Press (Roman Catholic) said: "Secularized western man has travelled east in his search for meaning. ... Westerners now are seeking to come home..." To facilitate it, the Paulist Press has begun issuing a projected 60 volume ecumenical series of writings of the great western mystics spiritual classics not published for generations. Along with that, the project will provide the first contemporary, fresh translations from the classic works of mysticism in Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Islamic and American Indian traditions. About a fifth of the texts will appear for the first time in English. A specially formed editorial board of thirty internationally known scholars in the United States and in other countries is to serve in order to advise on choices of texts.

The project comes in a day when modern prescriptions for self-help and spiritual boosting, many of them superficial or transient adaptations, have flooded the market along with popularized styles of oriental approaches. "There is a

gnawing hunger today that looks for nourishment from the great spiritual masters who provide us with the deepest experience and the most profound understanding of our own traditions," Lynch said. According to Baptist theologian Harvey Cox of Harvard University Divinity School, there is a spiritual crisis in the west and return to its own primal roots is the solution to that crisis. (Winnipeg Free Press, March 4, 1977)

CHAIRMANSHIP LOST OVER JESUS' CONTROVERSY

Dr. S. Robert Alley of the University of Richmond has lost the chairmanship of the department of Religion because he said in a speech that Jesus was really a Jew who never claimed to be the son of God. "I see Jesus as really a Jew," Alley was quoted by the *Richmond News Leader* as telling an atheist gathering. "I don't imagine for a minute that he would have had the audacity to claim the deity for himself. I think the (Bible) passages where he talks about the son of God are later additions — what the church said about him."

The speech by Dr. Alley produced a flood of angry letters to leading newspapers, outraged sermons by the clergy and threats of financial boycott by some alumni of the Baptist-founded university. The University President, E. B. Heilman made a formal apology but told angry clergy, however, that "I cannot make professors do things, I cannot muzzle them."

Dr. Alley's denial of the divinity of Christ has been expressed by a growing number of liberal theologians and Bible scholars. He has been at odds with conventional Baptist thinking for years through books and articles and has gained some notoriety for his views. (Washington Post, as quoted by Winnipeg Free Press, January 14, 1978).

NEW TESTAMENT DISCUSSIONS SURPRISE: JESUS' STATION?

True or false? (1) Jesus did not regard himself as God made flesh and probably did not call himself Messiah. (2)

Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead.

If you said "false", you are in step with popular understanding of the New Testament but out of step with the prevailing views of most prominent biblical scholars. This conclusion comes from interviews with U.S. scholars who reflect the teaching of all but the most conservative universities and theological schools.

There is a width of enormous gap between contemporary New Testament studies and the assumptions of the general public. For example, at the Catholic-and-Protestant Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, which has the largest theological faculty in the world, New Testament Professor Edward Hobbs says he doesn't know of one school in which a significant part of the faculty would accept statements that Jesus rose physically from the dead or that Jesus was divine being. He says: "Students come here in the first year and many of them are shocked and ask why they weren't told. The only answer is that many of the clergy are afraid, so they keep quiet about things they learned in Seminary."

Professor Hobbs was not the only scholar to blame the knowledge gap on the timidity of the clergy. Certainly such candor is rarely heard in the churches and seldom expressed in the news media. Such reactions were seen last year with the publishing in Great Britain of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, a collection of essays by seven British theologians. They said Jesus was best understood as "a man approved by God" (as is described in Acts 2:22) for a special role in the divine purpose.

The concept of Jesus as God in the Flesh "is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance to us," wrote the Rev. John Hick, a Birmingham University theology professor and the book's editor. Co-author Maurice Wiles, recently the Chairman of the Church of England's Doctrine Commission, said the Christian church, "has never succeeded in offering a consistent or convincing picture" of

Jesus as both fully human and fully divine.”

Some Bible interpretations that might seem radically new to non-specialists are actually “old” ones. One example is the opinion of scholars that Jesus did not claim to be a supernatural Messiah. What is more important, the scholars say, is that Jesus’ early followers were so impressed by his life, teachings and martyrdom that they tried to preserve that memory plus the reports, beliefs, that God had somehow raised him from death to an exalted heavenly position.

Broadly asumed in the New Testament research today is that the Gospels are not “biographies” but narratives of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection as seen by writers whose accounts are colored by their own perspectives. Even the most liberal theologians would not deny that the first Christians believed there was a resurrection, but a “spiritual” one rather than a “physical” one. The apostle Paul, whose letters to fledgling churches are the oldest New Testament writings, made that distinction himself in an epistle to the *Corinthians*. Accounts of an empty tomb and Jesus’ appearances to the disciples after his death are contained in later New Testament writings.

The Rev. John Burke, Executive Director of the World of God Institute, a Catholic organization devoted partly to that task, says he does not know of “any credible Biblical scholar who would hold for a bodily resurrection.” Jack Suggs, Dean of Texas Christian University’s Brite Divinity School, and the Rev. Gordon Jewett of Hutchinson, Kansas, agree with him. (Free Press, Winnipeg, Canada, Sept. 17, 1977).

JESUS OF NAZARETH

By

Imam A. U. Kaleem

Jesus of Nazareth is a prophet among many others who is revered by Muslims and Christians alike. Nevertheless, he is a person whose true picture has been distorted not only by those for whose salvation he was sent but also by his self-motivated votaries, the Jews and Christians alike.

If the Jews accused him with blasphemy of calling himself God to which he (Jesus) emphatically denied on more than one occasion; the Christians committed the same crime with a different interpretation and took him one into equal trinity. Again, if the Jews held that Jesus was put to death on the cross, and as such died an accursed death of an imposter's fate, the Christians accepted this charge with open arms with the only difference that he died an accursed death for their sins. To the Christians the cross is the only hope for salvation. It is the symbol of the Christian faith and the whole edifice of Christianity rests on it. But the cross has another side as well. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews is based upon the same cross.

As a matter of fact, much of the religion of Christendom is the outcome of the superstition of medieval times — a relic indeed of the dark ages and not much in sympathy with the teachings of Moses or Jesus. The divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the Sacraments, the Atonement and that the Immaculate conception is essential for the salvation of the immortal souls, is the religion of St. Paul and not quite the religion of Jesus Christ.

Jesus being quite aware of the condition of his disciples instructed them thus: "Go not in the way of Gentiles and into any city of Samaritans enter ye not, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (Matthew 10:5-9). He even took a further step and warned them by saying: "Give not

that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). The fishermen of Galilee were cautious enough of this warning and, therefore, they were "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only" (Acts 11:19). However, Saul, known today among Christians as St. Paul, set aside the instructions of Christ and took the initiative in introducing Jesus to the Gentiles – the pagans. This resulted in what the Master had already prophesied in his warning of Matthew (7:6), and the simple teachings of Jesus became an assimilation of paganism. Dr. Arthur S. Peake says in his *Commentary of the Bible* that, "many of our current Christian practices (but as a matter of fact the beliefs also) come of Mithraism. The 25th of December was the birthday of Mithra; the first day of the week, dedicated to the sun, was his holy day as opposed to the Jewish Sabbath. The Mithraics also practised baptism and confirmation and expected salvation from an eucharistic Last Supper". And again, "Mithras himself is a Mediator between the Supreme God and mankind. He is also a dying God, whose blood saves mankind, since he ultimately mystically identical both with bull which he sacrifices to the Sun, and with the Sun to whom the sacrifice is dedicated" (page 632).

What an irony of fate that those who called others heathens should turn out to be heathens themselves and believers in mythology. In view of such circumstances, is it then conceivable that God will permit the corruption due to human adulteration to be permanently attached to the religion He revealed to Jesus? Could He wait for our days when, as we now see, the best men in the Church have to come forward to admit the said adulteration and make strenuous efforts to restore the faith to the purity it originally possessed, when taught by Jesus? No. If God has spoken to man from time to time through long lines of Prophets to reveal His mind to His creatures; if God raised up Jesus to purge the message of Moses of all the fallacies which

had crept into it in his time, the same God raised another Prophet to purify the message of Jesus when it had become "corrupt and decrepit", to quote Sir William Muir, in the sixth century of the Christian era. At that time appeared the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) who brought the following message in the words of the Holy Quran:

"And the Christians say, the Messiah is the son of Allah; that is what they say with their mouths. They imitate the sayings of those who disbelieved before them. Allah's curse be on them. How are they turned away. They have taken their learned men and their monks for lords besides Allah. And so have they taken the Messiah, son of Mary. And they were not commanded but to worship the One God. There is no God but He, for what they associate with him" (9:30-31).

"They have indeed disbelieved who say, surely, God is none but the Messiah, son of Mary. Say, who then has any power against God if He desires to bring to naught the Messiah son of Mary, and his mother and all those that are in the earth? And to God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them. He creates what he pleases; and God has the power to do all things. (5:18)

While on the subject of Jesus, the Quran does not spare the use of strong terms in condemning the heathen idea. Thus it says:

"They are surely disbelievers who say, 'God is the third of the three'; there is no God but the One God. And if they do not desist from what they say, a grievous punishment shall surely befall those of them that disbelieve. Will they not then turn to God and beg for His forgiveness, while God is Most-Forgiving and Merciful" (5:74-75).

"O people of the Book, exceed not the limits in your religion and say not of God anything but the truth. Verily, the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God and (a fulfilment of) His word which He sent down to Mary and a mercy from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers

and say not (they are) three. Desist (it will be) better for you. Verily God is the Only One God. Far is it from His Holiness that He should have a son. To him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And sufficient is God as a guardian..." (4:172).

The present Bible, though undergone a lot of changes and alterations and the so called translator's modifications, yet bears the testimony of the Holy Quran and confirms the truth stated in it about this Godly man — Jesus of Nazareth. The true picture of Jesus in the Bible is the same what has been remarkably summarized in the Holy Quran, and not the one which Christendom has developed in the latter days.

An important point which must be kept in mind before making any reference towards Scriptures is that Jesus was not a law giver prophet, but rather a follower of the law of Moses. He has emphatically declared: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus himself acted always in accordance with the law of Moses and the prophets, of course with due observance of the spirit of the law, and bid his followers to do the same. We read in the Bible: "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat; All therefore what they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not'." (Matthew 23:1-3). Again, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Matthew 19:17-19). See also Matthew (22:37-40, 23:23), Luke (5:14, 16:17), John (4:11).

No doubt he did clarify a few of the commandments of

the law owing to the circumstances of the time, and the rigidity of the Jews to the very letter of the law without keeping in view the real spirit underlying the certain commandments; but the Pauline doctrines on which the present Christianity is based had never been advocated by Jesus. The present day doctrines are later innovations and have nothing to do with the simple and monotheistic teachings of Jesus.

The Basis of Christianity

As explained earlier, the present day Christianity is not the one taught by Jesus Christ but its entire doctrine is based on the teachings of Saul, otherwise known as St. Paul. Now according to *I Corinthians* (15:14), the entire structure of the present Christianity is based upon the resurrection of Christ after his alleged death on the cross, as St. Paul says: "And if Christ be not risen then our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

Hence if it is proved through the evidences of the Bible, and that of the other historic evidence that Jesus Christ (peace be on him) did not die on the cross and subsequently there had not occurred any supernatural resurrection, then the whole edifice of Christianity falls to the ground.

Why Did the Jews Like to Crucify Jesus Christ?

That very first question that irritates the mind of a seeker after truth is to ascertain the cause for which the Jews were anxious to crucify Jesus. The Jews regarded Jesus as an imposter. They left no stone unturned to justify their accusation by crucifying him and thus in accordance with *Deuteronomy* (21:23), proving him an accursed of God. Now if Jesus died on the cross, then the Jews succeeded in their machinations and the Scriptures are on their side to prove him an accursed of God. But how could Jesus, beloved and chosen prophet of God could die an accursed death? The reason repulses this idea and the prophecies reject this false notion.

While assaying the case with the criterion of reason, we must realize that curse or *La'nat* as it is called in Arabic, "has reference to the state of one's heart. A man would be said to be accursed when his heart, having been estranged from God, becomes really dark; when deprived of divine mercy and of divine love; devoid absolutely of His knowledge; blinded like the devil, he becomes filled with the poison of disbelief, when there remains not a ray of divine love and knowledge in him; when the bond of loyalty is broken, and between him and God there arises hatred, contempt, spite and hostility, so much as that God and he become mutual enemies; and when God becomes weary of him and he becomes weary of God; In short when he becomes an heir to all the attributes of the Devil — and that is why the Devil himself is called accursed."

Now keeping the above mentioned meaning of curse as given in the Lexicons in view, "can we say that Jesus' heart was ever really estranged from God, that he had denied God, that he hated Him and had become His enemy?" "If, then, Jesus had never been in such a state of mind; that his heart was always full of love and the light of divine knowledge, can we ever say that not one, but thousands of curses from God had descended upon the heart of Jesus with all their evil significance? Never. Then how can we say that he was, God forbid, accursed?" And it was due to this fact that even Paul had to utter the truth when he wrote in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, "that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." (12:3). Consequently his (Paul's) assertion in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (3:13), could not be taken as spoken by the Spirit of God but rather under the influence of Beelzebub.

Prophecy of Psalms.

After proving the futility of the notion of Jesus' accursed death through reason, let us turn to the Scriptures to find out

any prophecy that may strengthen our argument and falsify the conjecture of the Christians. Many of the commentators of the Bible have applied the *Psalms* 22 upon Jesus Christ (peace be on him) by referring to the events Jesus faced as were prophesied in the *Psalms*. The very first sentence of *Psalms* 22 — My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me — was uttered by Jesus when he was nailed on the cross. Now according to the verse 24 of this chapter of *Psalms*, Jesus could never die on the cross as it clearly points out that the prayer of the afflicted would be heard and his affliction would not be abhorred. The verse runs thus: "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard."

Moving Prayer of Jesus.

Before I quote the moving prayer of Jesus (peace be on him) from the Gospel which was accepted in fulfilment of the prophecy of *Psalms* it would not be out of place to refer to the circumstances which forced Jesus to offer this prayer to his God, the Almighty. As it is the usual practice of those who engross themselves in worldly pursuits, unmindful of their obligations to their Creator and that of their fellow beings; that they oppose the prophets of God who come to divert them from their spiritual degradation to the moral heights undreamed of; Jesus too was taken by his people as a stumbling block in the achievement of their materialistic gains. No stone was left unturned in nipping his mission in bud. Jesus, who knew of their evil machinations, took every precaution for his security in order to continue the sacred job of transformation. Once, as is mentioned in Matthew (16:20), he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."

When his opponents planned to kill him, Jesus ceased walking openly among the Jews and went to a country near the wilderness. (John, 11:54-57). He even hid himself from them (John, 12:36). Nevertheless, when he realized that the

earthly means of security could not avail him anything, he turned to his God, the Almighty, and even asked his disciples to do the same. We read in Mark (14:36), imploring God thus:

“Abba, father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me.”

Supplications similar to this are also recorded in Matthew (26:39) and Luke (22:42). This prayer Jesus offered in such an agony and so earnestly that “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke, 22:44)

A cursory study of the Scriptures shows beyond any shadow of doubt that God hears the prayers of the righteous. We read in James (5:16): “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.” We also read in John (9:31): “We know that God heareth not sinners, but any man be a worshipper of God and doth His will, him He heareth.” Add to it what Jesus (peace be on him) himself has said regarding the acceptance of his prayers: “And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John, 11:41-42).

It was due to his conviction that he exhorted his disciples to follow his example and always turn to God by saying: “Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. ... or what man is there for you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (Matthew 7:7-9).

Now if a son of man ask his father bread or fish and he will not give him stone or serpent, how could it be that Jesus' prayers offered to his Heavenly Father should remain

unheard and unaccepted? How could disciples believe that their prayers would be accepted when the prayers of their master, the annointed one of God, were not accepted. This is paradoxical indeed. As a matter of fact the prayer of Jesus offered in the garden of Gethsemane was heard by God the Almighty. He did save him from an accursed death on the cross. The acceptance of this prayer and consequently his escape from the death on the cross are clearly mentioned in Hebrew (5:7), which runs thus: "When he had offered up the prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared." So, where earthly means failed regarding the safety of Jesus from the accursed death on the cross, his heavenly Master came to his rescue when he approached Him through supplications with strong crying and tears, and saved him from the accursed death on the cross.

Prophecy of Jesus

Jesus Christ (peace be on him), a righteous prophet of God, knew on the basis of divine knowledge vouchsafed to him, by the All-Knowing God that he would be delivered of the evil machinations which his enemies will hatch against him. This deliverance would, therefore, be a clear evidence and a great sign of his being a chosen prophet of God. Hence, he announced a prophecy emphatically when he said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew, 12:39-40).

The words of the prophecy are clear. He has likened his fate to that of Jonas and has categorically stated that the only sign to the people of his time would be similar to that given to the Ninevites by Jonas the Prophet. Regarding this sign, Bible tells us the following: "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonas. And Jonas in the

belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonas prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. ... And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonas upon the dry land." (Jonah, 1:17, 2:1-2, 2:10).

Now read again the prophecy of Jesus (peace be on him) and you will have to conclude nothing but a simple fact that Jesus was saved from the accursed death on the cross, put into the heart of the earth (sepulchre) alive and there remained alive and came out alive. Conversely, if Jesus died on the cross and put into the heart of the earth (sepulchre) dead, then how could this be likened to the case of Jonas who was swallowed alive by the whale and remained in its belly alive and came out alive. The resemblance in both cases must be that of going *alive* into the belly of the fish and going *alive* in to the heart of the earth; and coming out *alive*.

As God heard the prayers of Jonas and delivered him out of his affliction, so God heard the prayers of Jesus and saved him from death on the cross. Thus God showed a great sign for the truth of Jesus as a chosen prophet of God. Had he died on the cross and gone into his grave dead, the similarity would have ended on a crucial point and his prophecy — a prophecy to which he attached such importance as to call it the only sign for the adulterous generation — would have remained unfulfilled. Even if we accept that he rose from the dead after three days and nights, the prophecy would still remain unfulfilled.

The Attitude of Pilate, the Governor.

Pilate was also sure of the innocence of Jesus and wanted to save Jesus as is demonstrated in Matthew (27, 17-18). He did all that was in his power to achieve this desired end. Even the soldiers, on Pilate's command, apparently offered Jesus benign treatment. Pilate did not deliver his judgement until

the hour when he could be sure that due to the proximity of the sabbath, Jesus would be on the cross for only a few hours. Jesus was given wine or vinegar (the two thieves crucified along with Jesus were not given this drink) to render him less sensitive to pain (Matthew 27:34). The unconsciousness which followed the administration of this drink was mistaken for death (John 19:30).

Dream of Pilate's Wife.

As Joseph was shown a dream in order to save the life of Jesus in his childhood, and consequently took Jesus and his mother to Egypt (Matthew, 2:13); similarly Pilate's wife had a dream, mentioned in Matthew (27:19), which was meant to save the life of Jesus.

Other Factors.

The time Jesus remained on the cross was about three hours (John 19:14) or, according to Mark, six hours (15:33). Neither of these periods was sufficient to kill a young man like Jesus on the Cross. That is why the experienced Pilate, who must have ordered the crucifixion of thousands, marvelled if he were already dead (Mark 15:44).

The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus whereas the legs of the two others crucified with Jesus were broken. (John 19:32-33)

The side of Jesus being pierced, blood rushed out, and this was a clear sign of life. (John 19:38)

After he was taken down from the Cross, it was not to his enemies, but to his friends that his body was given (John 19:38). Rev. Dummelow, describing the manner in which the body of Jesus was treated, says: "The myrrh and aloe wood reduced to powder were inserted between the bandages which were fold upon fold.... The neck and face of the body were doubtless left bare." (Commentary on the Holy Bible, pp. 808)

The famous *Marham Isa*, the ointment of Jesus, was applied to heal his wounds. The prescription of this ointment

is given in numerous ancient oriental medical treatises. It is stated therein that it was applied to the wounds of Jesus when he was taken down from the Cross.

Shroud of Jesus in Turin, Italy.

The two thousand year old winding sheet of Christ has been preserved in the Italian town of Turin. It bears the impression of Christ's body. By virtue of the available evidence, it has been proven by scientists that the person wrapped in the shroud was not dead. The blood stains, due to blood flowing freely from the wounds, show beyond any shadow of doubt that the heart was then still active in the body.

The Burial

Jesus was not buried like other criminals. The tomb in which Jesus was laid was hewn in a rock (Mark 15:46) and was like a chamber in which a number of men could stay without being suffocated. It belonged to his devoted friend who must have lavished care on him so as to restore him to consciousness.

When the tomb was seen on the third day, the stone was found to have been removed from its mouth, which would not have been the case if there had been a supernatural rising. (Luke 24:2)

Coming Out of Sepulchre.

After coming out of the sepulchre Jesus, still in his flesh, met with the disciples. When some of them doubted, Jesus showed them his wounds to assure them that he was not a spirit but a man of flesh and bones. (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:27) He also felt hungry and partook food with his disciples (Luke 24:41-43)

Jesus undertook a journey to Galilee with two of his disciples walking side by side with him. It shows clearly that he was fleeing to a place of safety. If his object had been to

rise to heaven, he would not have undertaken a journey to Galilee. Had he died upon the Cross and come back to life again, as the Christians assert to prove the doctrine of Attonement, he would have proceeded to the highest point in Jerusalem and proclaimed his triumph over death to the disbelieving Jews and, putting forth this irrefutable proof of his being the son of God, would have invited them to believe in him as such. He did not do this. Instead, he met with his disciples a few times to convince them of the fact that he did not die on the Cross, had not become 'accursed' and was still alive in the physical body. He even took precautions to meet them only in secret.

Alleged Prophecy of Resurrection.

The alleged prophecy about his resurrection is not a fact. According to John 20:9, Peter and the other disciples did not know it, and Luke says that the apostles took the news as an idle tale and they believed not (24:11). Had Jesus told his disciples that he would rise again, the apostles must have known it. The above mentioned fact shows clearly that Jesus did not die on the Cross, that he was removed from the Cross in a state of unconsciousness and, after having been tended to carefully by those who were devoted to him, he regained consciousness and left the sepulchre alive as he had prophesied.

His Refuge

The question arises where then, did Jesus go after the event of crucifixion? The Holy Quran gives the answer to this question. It says: "And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, and gave them refuge on an elevated land of green valleys and springs of running water." (23:51)

Jesus is reported to have said: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John 10:51) He was referring to the lost ten

tribes of Israel who had scattered in Kashmir, which the word of God has described as ‘ an elevated land of green valleys and springs of running water’. It is beyond the scope of this article to dwell on the historical evidences which prove that the occupant of the tomb found on the Khanyar street of Sirinagar, Kashmir, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, who as the local legend says, came there about two thousand years ago, and was the Prince Prophet *Yus-Asaf* (or Jesus the Gatherer).

ISLAM AND ITS GROWTH IN AMERICA

By

Imam Mian Muhammad Ibrahim

"He it is Who has raised among the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves... And among others who have not yet joined them."

The verse signifies that the message of the Holy Prophet was meant not only for the Arabs among whom he was raised but for all non-Arabs as well, and not only for his contemporaries but also for the coming generations till the end of time. Says Abu Hurairah:

"One day we were sitting with the Holy Prophet when Sura Jumah was revealed. I asked the Holy Prophet, who are the people to whom the words 'and among others from among them who have not yet joined them' refer. Salman, the Persian, was sitting among us. Upon my repeatedly asking him the same question, the Prophet put his hand on Salman and said: 'If faith was to go up to the Pleiades, a man from these would surely find it.' "

The Hadith shows that this verse applies to a man of Persian descent. Now, the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was of Persian descent. Other sayings of the Holy Prophet speak of the appearance of the Messiah at a time when there would remain nothing of the Quran but its words, and of Islam but its name — the true spirit of Islamic teachings would be lost. The Quran and the Hadith both seem to agree that the present verse refers to the second advent of the Holy Prophet in the person of the Promised Messiah.

"Verily, We ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely, We will be its Guardians."

The Promise about the preservation of the Quran in this verse has been remarkably fulfilled. This distinctive feature of the Quran has not been shared by any other book revealed to any other prophet. Sir W. Muir, the well-known critic of

Islam, says about the Quran:

"We may, upon the stronger presumption, affirm that every verse in the Quran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mohammad himself..."

"There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mohammad gave forth and used..."

"To compare their pure text with the various readings of our scripture is to compare things between which there is no analogy."

And says Pro. Noldeke, the great German Orientalist:

"Efforts of European scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Quran have failed."

The importance of this security of the Quranic text is further enhanced when we compare it with other revealed scriptures. The Quran, the most widely read of all revealed scriptures, enjoys complete immunity from all sorts of corruption. It has been brought about by special providence of God. He has provided for the preservation of its spirit also. This has been done by raising divinely inspired Reformers among the Muslims from time to time. These reformers receive revelations from God and interpret and explain the true meaning of the Quranic text. After the advent of Islam, divinely inspired Reformers appeared among the followers of Islam. In our own time, God has raised Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, to demonstrate the truth and excellence of the Quran. The appearance of such reformer in itself constitutes proof of the living power of a religion and its scriptures inasmuch as they are really the fruit of their religion and their appearance proves its efficacy. God, by raising heavenly Reformers, whenever Muslims forget or fall away from the teachings of the Quran, restores to them their faith in its pristine purity.

"He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, even if those who associate partners with God hate it."

Most commentators of the Quran are agreed that this verse applies to the Promised Messiah in whose time all religions will make their appearance and the superiority of Islam over all of them will be established.

I will now proceed to explain how this prophecy about the spread and dominance of Islam is being fulfilled in America. The Holy Prophet of Islam predicted, as God revealed to him, that the West would make a rapid progress in worldly matters to such an extent that the Easterners will be fascinated by its worldly pomp and splendor. Spiritual darkness would prevail in the West, for its people would be fully engrossed in materialism. Then God would send the Promised Messiah with heavenly light to dispel the darkness.

The Promised Messiah himself wrote with regard to this prophecy:

“The rising of the sun from the West as predicted by the Holy Prophet of Islam means that the Western countries, which for centuries have been in darkness of disbelief and error, shall be illuminated by the sun of righteousness and shall share in the blessings of Islam.”

“Almighty God has informed me that He will spread my Movement over the whole world and my followers will be made dominant over all other people.”

We wholeheartedly believe that Islam shall spread in the West and its spreading will be completed as God has informed the Promised Messiah, within three centuries. Many righteous inhabitants of Europe and America will accept Islam. The American nation which has been given worldly wealth will be given spiritual wealth also.

The Ahmadiyya Mission in America was opened in 1921. The USA had, however, already heard the name of Islam in the life time of the Promised Messiah himself when the Founder of the Movement challenged to a prayer duel Dr. Alexander Dowey who was the leader of a mushroom movement as a false claimant. He met his end as foretold by Hazrat Ahmad, leaving in his end a sign for the people of this

country to ponder. As a champion of Islam, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement circulated hundreds and thousands of leaflets describing the excellences of Islam, and one of the notables to accept Islam was Mr. Webb, who later served the cause of Islam as honorary missionary in and outside America.

A mission center was started by Hazrat Mufti M. Sadiq who held a very prominent position in the Movement. Several others have followed in his wake ever since and contributed substantially to the growth of Islam in America. We have now several missionaries working in America, with headquarters in Washington. We have our mosques in Dayton, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, Baltimore and St. Louis. Besides these places we have Ahmadiyya communities of considerable standing in Cincinnati, Athens, Indianapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, Waukegan, Streamwood and Milwaukee in Midwest and Great Lakes Regions. On the East Coast, we have communities in Boston, New York, Teaneck and Philadelphia; with Washington, Baltimore and York in the same area. In the Western region there are Jamaats in Oregon and California. Around the Gulf we have regular communities in Jackson, Miss., and Miami, Fla. In short, the communities exist in almost every American region, with about thirty organized communities. Individuals are, of course, scattered throughout America.

In the way of literature the mission headquarters has a stack of about eighty kinds of books for distribution. Sets of Ahmadiyya literature have been placed on the shelves of hundreds of libraries in the USA. The quarterly *Muslim Sunrise* and monthly *Ahmadiyya Gazette* are brought out for the propagation of Islam and for the education and information of the Ahmadiyya communities in the country. Active mosques and mission houses with missionaries have educated the converts in the Islamic theology and some of them are recognized speakers on Islam and exercise moral and wholesome influence among people they live with. Our Muslim

brothers can read the Arabic script of the Quran and some of them can recite the Holy Quran quite correctly and melodiously. Many of these brothers were formerly afflicted with all sorts of vice and immoral activities, loot, arson, drugs, wine and women were their hallmarks and they were notorious and worthless citizens. But change in faith has changed their attitude towards life. They are now known as law abiding and peaceful citizens.

In Dayton, Ohio, we recently held a reception in honor of the Director General of our missionary activities, Sahibzada Mirza Mubarak Ahmad, which was attended by the Mayor. The mayor expressed his appreciation of the style of life the Ahmadies were living which was recognized as a marvellous contribution to law and order. These men and women are striving to translate the teachings of Islam in their actual lives. A marvellous spiritual transformation indeed! They say their prayers regularly, many even pray in the small hours of the morning — Tahajjud. While conversing with one another, *Jazakumullah* instead of thank you and *Alhamdo Lillah* in place of You are welcome is now a feature. Financial sacrifices which they make are remarkable, and absolute submission to religious authority has absolutely changed these otherwise independent Americans.

A clear change is beginning to be perceptible in the American people towards Islam, from a more or less outspoken hostility to an open minded and even sympathetic approach. Islam as presented by the Ahmadiyya missionaries is gaining recognition and Muslim doctrines are being accepted as rational and reasonable. Arguments and proofs in favor of Islamic teachings are irrefutable. Islamic teaching is being recognized as a cure for economic, social and political evils of mankind. *Alhamdo Lillah!*

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

The Muslim Sunrise is a quarterly magazine, founded in 1921 by Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, the first Muslim missionary in the U.S.A. The magazine is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835–1908). The Movement is currently headed by Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad – third successor – with Headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Movement aims at presenting to the world the true meaning and teaching of Islam. The American Headquarters of the Movement are located at:

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All other correspondence, including subscriptions, should be addressed to the Publishers:

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Printed at the Fazl-i-Umar Press, Pomeroy Road
P. O. Box 338, Athens, Ohio 45701